

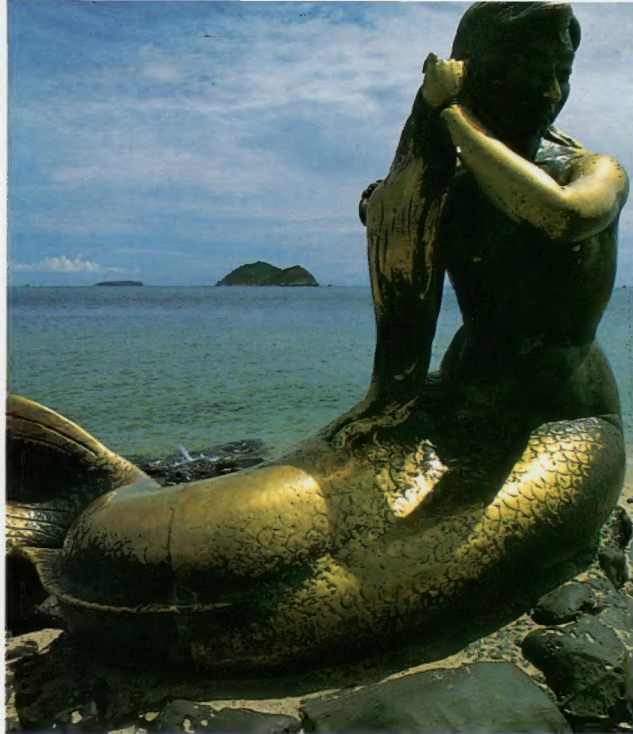
Songkhla & Hat Yai

TOURIST INFORMATION



*The Golden Mermaid statue on Samila
Beach is the major provincial landmark*

EXOTIC
Thailand



Introduction.

Songkhla is an eastern coastal province in southern Thailand edging the Thai Gulf. The province covers some 7,150 square kilometres. The provincial capital is 950 kilometres south of Bangkok.

Linked to the provincial capital by a 30-minute road journey along Highway 407, Hat Yai is Songkhla's and southern Thailand's principal commercial, communications, entertainment and shopping centre.

Songkhla was formerly known as *Singha-la* (a lion) by Indian, Persian and Arabian merchants since the petite offshore Cat and Rat islands presented a somewhat leonine appearance from the sea.

Once a medieval pirate stronghold, Songkhla is a sleepy historic town with a thriving fishing community edging the fine Samila Beach and the Great Songkhla Lake, Thailand's largest body of inland water.

City Attractions

Samila Beach

3 kilometres from the municipal market on Ratchadamnoen Road, this fine beach is characterised by soft white sand and beachside pine trees. The major landmark is the Golden Mermaid statue fronting the headland.

Khao Noi

This hillock behind the Samila Beach headland commands a panoramic view of Songkhla, and contains a fitness park and a petite topiary garden.

Songkhla Golf Course

Locally known as Thong Yai Golf Course, this 9-hole beachside course faces Samila Beach. It is open to the public daily. Green, caddy and golf rental fees are 50, 100, and 200 baht respectively. Reservations may be made by contacting Songkhla (area code: 074) 323-761.

Son Onn Beach

This lies directly north of Samila Beach. Hundreds of beachside pine trees provide cool shade for several restaurants offering simple but deliciously fresh seafood. The attractive area is particularly popular during the late afternoon and evening.

Cat & Rat Islands

These prominent marine landmarks face Samila and Son Onn beaches. The island's coastal waters are favoured by local anglers.

Khao Seng

This headland 3 kilometres south of the Golden Mermaid statue shelters a Muslim fishing village noteworthy for *Korlae* fishing boats decorated with hand-painted floral motifs.



National Institute of Coastal Aquaculture

Located 1 kilometre south of Khao Seng, this complex contains laboratories, a fish museum and hatcheries for important marine life such as prawns, turtles, gigantic sea perch and groupers. Visitors may contact Songkhla (area code: 074) 311-895 during working hours to gain admission.

Tang Khuan Hill

Located west of Khao Noi, this supports ancient pagodas and royal pavilions in a bucolic setting.

Pak Nam Laem Sai Fort

Located near Tang Khuan, behind the Songkhla Police Station, this complex dates from the early 1800s when 'modern' Songkhla was constructed..

Songkhla National Museum

This lovely complex on Rongmuang Road dates from the 1870s and was constructed in southern Thai-Chinese architectural style as the residence of a local merchant. The museum houses Thai *objets d'art* dating from prehistoric to modern times. The museum is open from 9.00 AM until 12.00 noon and from 1.00 until 4.00 PM daily, except Mondays, Tuesdays and national holidays.

Central Market

Located on Nakhon Nai Road opposite the Post Office, this is the major venue for purchasing fresh seafood, poultry, meat, herbs, fruits, vegetables and spices, and is open every day from early morning to late afternoon.

Wat Matchimawat

The 400-year-old complex on Saibun Road is Songkhla's largest monastery. A temple museum contains several ruins and artifacts discovered throughout southern Thailand.

Wat Chaimongkhon

Located near the former railway station, the main pagoda contains a holy relic of the Lord Buddha obtained from Sri Lanka.

Out-of-City Attractions

Great Songkhla Lake

Thailand's largest inland body of water extends some 80 kilometres northwards from its estuarine entrance near Son Onn Beach. The freshwater lake, and national park, extends

Left to Right:

Songkhla's most prominent landmark, the Golden Mermaid statue, photographed against Cat and Rat Islands, the popular Samila Beach, and the Thai-Chinese architectural style of Songkhla's National Museum

Hat Yai City Map

not drawn to scale



Songkhla & Hat Yai Tourism Map

not drawn to scale





some 20 kilometres at its widest point and supports two wildfowl sanctuaries, namely the *Nok Nam Thale Noi* at its northernmost end, near Phattalung, and the **Khu Khut Waterfowl Park** near Songkhla. Khu Khut is best visited by travelling by road to Km. 126 on Highway 4107, and thence to Khu Khut village from where hired boats explore the area. The sanctuary supports some 140 species of migratory and resident birds. Literally thousands of birds can be seen, particularly during late afternoon when they are at their most active.

Wat Pha Kho

This is located beside the Great Songkhla Lake in Sathing Phra district. The temple was once the residence of the venerated holy man, the late Luang Pho Thuat. According to legend, Luang Pho Thuat was once kidnapped by pirates. Their ship was blown off course during a violent storm and their fresh water was exhausted. They suffered great discomfort until Luang Pho Thuat inserted his left foot into salt water to make it drinkable. The pirates were so grateful, they immediately released him. A statue of the great man, a Reclining Buddha image, a stupa and murals number among major temple attractions.

Institute of Southern Thai Studies

This folklore museum is located on Ko Yo Hill, some 10 kilometres from Songkhla, or 20 kilometres from Hat Yai. The museum houses a collection of southern Thai arts categorically grouped into a Shadow Play Garden, Ancient Beads

Garden, Traditional Medicinal Garden, Bamboo Culture Garden and the like. A great variety of local plant species within the museum compound helps make it an exceptionally appealing place.

Hat Yai City Attractions.

Wat Hat Yai Nai

This complex near the bridge crossing Klong U-Tapao on the airport road, is popular with Chinese and Malaysian visitors, and houses a Reclining Buddha image some 35 metres long and 15 metres in height.

Ruchirawong Shooting Range

This is located opposite the Hat Yai Police Station. Details may be obtained by contacting Ruchirawong Shooting Range at Tel:243-311.

Out-of-City Attractions

Ton Nga Chang Waterfall

Literally translated as *Elephant Tusk Waterfall*, this cascade is located some 24 kilometres west of Hat Yai in Rattaphum district along Highway 4, and at the end of a turning from Hu Rae village. The towering seven-tiered waterfall cascades down a steep cliff in two streams resembling elephant tusks. The waterfall is loveliest when water is most abundant,



generally from October through December.

Chana Doves

These are found in Chana district, some 40 kilometres south-east of Hat Yai. The cooing doves are popular with Muslim villagers. Dove cooing competitions are organised annually between January and June among dove lovers in Chana, and nearby Trang, Pattani and Narathiwat provinces. Doves are caged in poles 6 to 8 metres tall. Judgement of the dove's sound is based on pitch, melody and volume. Winning doves are valued for as much as US\$12,000. Chana's dove nurseries welcome visitors. Admission is free.

Tham Khao Rup Chang

Literally translated as *Elephant-shaped Mountain*, and located near Wat Khao Rup Chang, some 10 kilometres from Padang Besar market, three large caves with natural stalagmite and stalactite formations house Mahayana Buddhist images.

Shopping

Hat Yai offers particularly good buys in Thai handicrafts, readymade leisure and sportswear, preserved Thai fruits, seafood delicacies, and imported foodstuffs from all over Southeast Asia and China. Principal shopping areas are concentrated around the Niphat-Uthit 2 and 3 Roads, Sanehanuson Road and the Plaza Market.

Special Events

Sat Duan Sip Festival

The Festival of the Tenth Lunar Month, each September, is a traditional merit-making occasion for the benefit of deceased ancestors when, over a 15-day period, food offerings are made to Buddhist monks.

Chinese Lunar Festival

Each September, or October, Thais of Chinese ancestry make offerings to the Moon, or Queen of the Heavens, in gratitude for past and future fortune. Traditional festivities include lion and dragon dances, lantern processions, contests, displays and folk entertainment.

Left to Right:

Teeming waterfowl at the Great Songkhla Lake's Khu Khut Waterfowl Park, the Ton Nga Chang Waterfall, Wat Pha Kho and some of Chana's cooing doves

Overleaf:

Typical Hat Yai street shopping attractions and scenes

How To Get To Hat Yai (& Songkhla)

By Bus

Airconditioned coaches and non-airconditioned buses leave Bangkok's Southern Bus Terminal for Hat Yai every day. For further details, please contact Bangkok 434-5558.

By Rail

Several trains leave Bangkok's Hualampong Railway Station daily for Hat Yai. Some trains continue into Malaysia and journey onwards to Singapore. Please contact Bangkok 223-7010, 223-7020 for further details.

By Air

Thai Airways operates daily 75-minute flights from Bangkok to Hat Yai. Please contact Bangkok 280-0070, or 280-0080 for further details.

Hat Yai-Songkhla Connections

Green buses (no. 1871) leave the bus stand on Phetkasem Road in front of the Hat Yai Plaza Theatre (clock tower) every 30 minutes from 6.00 AM until 7.30 PM every day. The fare is 9 baht per person.

A daily taxi service is also available from 6.00 AM until 10.00 PM. The taxi stand is in front of the President Hotel on Petkasem Road. Each taxi accommodates 7 passengers. The fare is 15 baht per person per trip.

Tourism Authority of Thailand

Head Office

4 Ratchadamnoen Nok Avenue
Bangkok 10100, Thailand
Tel: (66 2) 281-0422 (20 lines)
Fax: (66 2) 224-6221

Accommodation

A comprehensive list of airconditioned and non-airconditioned accommodation, and restaurants, in Songkhla and Hat Yai can be obtained from the local Tourism Authority of Thailand office on Niphat-Uthit 3 Road. The office is open seven days a week, throughout the year, from 8.30 AM until 4.30 PM.



NOTE

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this brochure, certain facts, such as prices and telephone numbers are subject to change without notice. Visitors are therefore advised to check with the Hat Yai TAT office on Niphat-Uthit 3 Road for current information.

Hat Yai Office

Soi 2 Niphat-Uthit 3 Road
Hat Yai, Songkhla 90110
Tel: (074) 243-747, 238-518
Fax: (074) 245-986